466 Formerly the employee was an apprentice with a status of a house servant, but now the relationship is regulated by written contracts.

4. Male and Female Servants

• 566 Up to the early years of Japanese rule a type of true servitude existed in Formosa. These servants were not slaves, but were bought and sold for money, and were very low in social status. Male servants disappeared earlier in time, but female servants remained until a much later date. It is interesting to note that, the civil status of female servants in Formosa was somewhat different from their status on the mainland. On the mainland their servitude was life-long, but in Taiwan they were bought by contract, and emancipated when the servant or her family could provide money to buy her back. In the case of marriage, her intended husband had to pay money to buy her freedom. Her status somewhat resembled the indentured servant of colonial North America. The frontier spirit, the newness of social institutions, and the scarcity of women seem to be the cause of this contrast between the mainland and Taiwan.

In 1917, the higher court of justices in Taipei invalidated the purchase system of female servants as detrimental to public welfare and morals. The following year the commissioner of police, fortified by this

566 decision, instructed the census department of the local police to confirm all existing female servants but to refuse any new registrations. Another blow was given to the system of female servants by the higher court of justice in 1935. According to this decision, a female servant could emancipate herself whenever she desired, and the householder could not object. Thus, at least nominally and legally, the institution of female servants was abolished. However, it has continued in fact under the new name of "adopted daughters". In 1935, at a conference of social workers, the system of female servants was assailed, and a program for improvement was recommended. At present, one seldom hears about female servants, but in fact some are still kept under the name of adopted daughters. Their status is, however, much improved in comparison with former times. The name "adopted daughters" includes female servants, girls for prostitution, and true adopted daughters. After the restoration of the island to China, the system of "adopted daughters" was frowned upon. Article 296 of the Chinese Criminal Code provides that selling a person into servititude or restraining the liberty of a person is a criminal offense punishable with imprisonment of one to seven years. The custom is abating and may totally disappear in the course of time.